

Sub B 117
33. (New) A system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from electronic gaming machines used by players, the system comprising:

a central computer;

a pay-out voucher database comprising pay-out voucher records; and

a plurality of wireless computer devices adapted for manual transport and configured for use by gaming establishment personnel, each of said wireless computer devices comprising

a data input interface configured to receive manually or semi-manually entered pay-out voucher identification information based upon information existing on the pay-out vouchers dispensed from the electronic gaming machines;

a wireless transceiver configured to communicate with said central computer via a remote wireless interface and transmit voucher validation requests thereby, and to receive validation responses from the central computer, and

a display configured to display information pertaining to the validation responses received from the central computer.

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34. (New) The system of claim 33, wherein the pay-out vouchers are dispensed from the electronic gaming machines at the termination of gaming sessions in response to player pay-out requests and reflect arbitrary amounts of accumulated gaming machine credit during the gaming sessions.

REMARKS

Amendment to the Abstract

Applicants have amended the Abstract to make it more concise. In doing so, Applicants rely upon the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.72(b) which states that "[t]he abstract shall not be used for interpreting the scope of the claims." Applicants do not intend the Abstract to describe the elements of any particular claim or to limit all possible embodiments of the invention.

The Claim Rejection

Claims 1-23 presently stand rejected under § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,871,398 (Schneier et al). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Particular focus will be placed initially on the independent claims (i.e., claims 1, 6, 13, and 19), with further discussion thereafter relating to the dependent claims.

Schneier et al '398 describes a system that is fundamentally different than the subject matter of the instant claims. Schneier et al '398 relates to an off-line¹ remote gaming (e.g., lottery) system in which games are played on handheld computer devices ("HTVs"). Off-line gaming is enabled by downloading pre-defined results or game outcomes from a central management computer ("CMC") to one of the HTVs, with the player purchasing these games in advance. As stated in Schneier et al '398 at Col. 6:13-16:

"Thus, the player is essentially purchasing outcomes/game authorizations from the CMC 12. These are transferred to the HTV 20 and may be revealed through various games generated thereon."

The player then plays the games at his or her convenience on the HTV and, when finished, can redeem any winnings through a redemption transaction as described at Col. 16, line 26 et seq. Payout authorization is forwarded from the central management computer or CMC to an agent terminal ("AT", i.e., a "retailer" – see Col. 5:63-64 and Col. 6:5-7), whereupon the player can collect his or her winnings. Alternatively, the HTV can bypass the AT and communicate directly with the CMC through a base station network as illustrated in the embodiment of Fig. 13 of Schneier et al '398.

It is of particular note that the handheld computer device of Schneier et al '398 is used by the player for, e.g., playing various games. In contrast to Schneier et al '398, claims 1-23 do not specifically attempt to claim *playing games* on a

¹ While the Office Action states in paragraph 4 that Schneier discloses a wireless ticket device used for off-line "*and on-line*" gaming, there does not appear to be any mention in Schneier of an inventive "on-line" gaming system, and in fact Schneier et al go out of their way to criticize prior art on-line gaming systems.

handheld computer device, but rather relate to a portable or handheld computer device useful to casino floor personnel (for example) to validate pay-out vouchers that have been dispensed from the electronic gaming machines (which of course themselves can be stationary or portable, wired or wireless, etc.), or in other words, to validate pay-out vouchers that have been generated from other devices (EGMs).

Thus, for example, claim 1 relates to a method including, among other things, the steps of "receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from an electronic gaming machine"; transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface ...; conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer; retrieving a voucher record in a voucher database ...; transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from said central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher record was found and not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if either said voucher record was not found or else the pay-out voucher was already paid; and displaying an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device." It is respectfully submitted that these steps are neither disclosed in nor suggested by Schneier et al '398.

It may be true, as pointed out in the Office Action, that Schneier et al '398 describes the use of an authentication redemption request message (ARRM) that can be, e.g., printed out on a receipt and entered into an agent terminal (AT) or otherwise conveyed to the CMC. However, the ARRM is not generated as a result of "receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from an electronic gaming machine," as recited in claim 1.

Likewise, claim 6 relates to a system "for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine," wherein, among other things, a "wireless, portable computer device receives voucher validation request information relating to pay-out vouchers through its data input interface, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays

voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications on its display in response to receiving them from said central computer.” Claim 19 similarly relates to a “system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine,” and further recites, among other things, “a plurality of wireless, portable computer devices,” wherein each such device receives voucher validation request information relating to pay-out vouchers through its data input interface, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications on its display in response to receiving them from said central computer.” For reasons explained above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 6 and 19 should be patentable over Schneier et al ‘398.

Claim 13 relates to a method “for on-line or off-line validation of gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine,” and, in a similar vein to claim 1, 6, and 19, includes the step of “receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from an electronic gaming machine.” Claim 13 also involves a number of combined features not found in claims 1, 6, and 19. For example, claim 13 includes the steps of “attempting to retrieve a voucher record in a voucher database based upon said voucher identification information; confirming, if said voucher record was retrieved, that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been ...; transmitting, if said voucher record could not be retrieved, a voucher record unavailable indication from said central network computer, via said remote wireless interface, to said wireless, portable computer device; receiving said voucher record unavailable indication at said wireless, portable computer device and, in response thereto, displaying an off-line error message; receiving a voucher amount at said wireless, remote computer device after displaying said off-line error message; transmitting said voucher amount and said voucher identification information, via said wireless interface, to said central network computer from said wireless, portable computer device; and preparing a voucher database reconciliation record at said central network computer for updating said voucher database at a subsequent time to reflect that

the pay-out voucher has been paid.” It is respectfully submitted that none of these additional steps are remotely suggested by Schneier et al ‘398.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 1, 6, 13, and 19 are each patentable with respect to Schneier et al ‘398.

Claims 2-5, 7-12, 14-18, and 20-23 depend upon claims 1, 6, 13, and 19, respectively, and should therefore be patentable as well. Moreover, the dependent claims also contain additional novel and independently patentable features. For example, claim 3 recites the further steps of “automatically transmitting from an electronic gaming machine, when the pay-out voucher is initially dispensed, said voucher identification information and the pay-out amount to said central network computer through an on-line gaming system connection; and creating and storing a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.” It is respectfully submitted that in Schneier et al ‘398 there is no description of, among other things, “automatically transmitting” voucher identification information and a pay-out amount “from an electronic gaming machine” to a central network computer through an “on-line gaming system connection” when the pay-out voucher is initially dispensed from the electronic gaming machine, as called for by claim 3.

Claim 8 depends from claim 6, and further recites a “gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines, wherein an electronic gaming machine automatically transmits voucher identification information and pay-out amount to said central computer via said gaming machine interface each time a pay-out voucher is dispensed from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer creates and stores a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.” Claim 21, which depends from claim 19, is similar. It is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 8 and 21 is not disclosed in nor suggested by Schneier et al ‘398.

Claim Amendments

Various claim amendments have been made to claims 1-23. Many of the amendments were made to correct or clarify antecedent basis and have no impact at all on the subject matter or scope of the claims. Some of the amendments are explained below.

Throughout claims 1-23, the term "voucher" has been changed to --pay-out voucher-- to reflect the nature of the vouchers being dispensed from the electronic gaming machines.

The term "printed by" and similar terms have been replaced with the broader language --dispensed from--. Claim 1, for example, presently recites that the method relates to "gaming vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine," rather than "printed by an electronic gaming machine."

Claim 3 has been amended to recite the step of "automatically" transmitting the voucher identification information and pay-out amount from the electronic gaming machine "through an on-line gaming system connection." Claims 8 and 21 similarly have been amended to recite that transmission of the voucher identification information and pay-out amount is carried out "automatically" by the electronic gaming machine.

Claim 6 has been amended to clarify that confirmation that the pay-out voucher has not yet been paid is carried out "by checking the voucher record." Claim 19 has been amended in a somewhat similar manner, with confirmation being made "from the voucher database."

New Claims

New claims 24-34 have been added. Of these, new claims 24, 27, 31, and 33 are independent. New claims 25-26 depend from claim 24; new claims 28-30 depend from claim 27; new claim 32 depends from claim 31; and new claim 34 depends from claim 33.

New claim 24 relates to a system for "validating pay-out vouchers dispensed from electronic gaming machines" and includes, among other things, "a central computer; a pay-out voucher database ...; a plurality of wireless computer devices adapted for manual transport, each of said wireless computer devices comprising a

display, a data input interface, and a wireless transceiver; and a wireless interface communicatively coupled to said central computer...; wherein said central computer receives validation requests electronically from said wireless computer devices via said wireless interface, confirms by checking the pay-out voucher database that a given pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, and sends to the wireless computer device ... either a voucher pay-out approval indication or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication...; and wherein each of said wireless computer devices is configured to receive pay-out voucher identification information through its data input interface, to transmit voucher validation requests to said central computer via its wireless transceiver in response to receiving the pay-out voucher identification information through its data input interface, and to display voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications from the central computer on its display."

New claim 25 depends from claim 24, and specifies that the central computer "updates the pay-out voucher database when sending a pay-out approval indication to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid." New claim 26 also depends from claim 24, and recites that the central computer and electronic gaming machines "are connected in an on-line gaming system configuration," and that the system further comprises "a gaming machine interface via which the electronic gaming machines convey voucher identification information and voucher pay-out amounts to the pay-out voucher database when pay-out vouchers are dispensed...."

Claim 27 is a new independent claim relating to a system "for facilitating real-time validation of pay-out vouchers dispensed from electronic gaming machines so as to assist gaming floor personnel," and includes, among other things, "a central computer; a gaming machine interface via which a plurality of electronic gaming machines convey voucher identification information and voucher pay-out amounts when pay-out vouchers are dispensed from the electronic gaming machines; a voucher database accessible to said central computer...; a wireless interface communicatively coupled to said central computer; and a plurality of wireless computer devices adapted for manual transport, each of said wireless computer devices comprising data input interface configured to receive manually or semi-manually entered pay-out voucher identification information based upon information present on the pay-out vouchers dispensed from the electronic gaming machines, a

wireless transceiver configured to communicate with said central computer via said wireless interface and transmit voucher validation requests thereby, and to receive validation responses from the central computer, and a display configured to display information pertaining to the validation responses received from the central computer."

New claim 28 depends from claim 27, and recites that the central computer "receives the validation requests electronically from said wireless computer devices via said wireless interface, confirms by checking the voucher database that a given pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, and sends to the wireless computer device that sent the voucher validation request, via said wireless interface, either a voucher pay-out approval indication or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication depending upon whether the voucher was previously paid." New claim 29 also depends from claim 27, and recites that the pay-out voucher identification information is entered "through a keyboard, keypad, mouse, or stylus," while new claim 30 recites that that pay-out voucher identification information is entered "through an optical scanner."

Claim 31 is a new independent claim relating to a method of validating gaming pay-out vouchers, and includes, among other things, the steps of "receiving at a central network computer, from an electronic gaming machine, voucher pay-out transaction information including a voucher identifier and a pay-out amount corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from the electronic gaming machine; creating and storing a voucher record in a voucher database in response to said voucher pay-out transaction information; receiving by manual or semi-manual input said voucher identifier at a wireless, portable computer device; transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface...; conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer; retrieving a voucher record in a voucher database...; confirming from the voucher record that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been paid; updating said voucher record ...; transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from the central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher record was found and not yet paid, or else a

voucher pay-out disapproval...; and displaying an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval at said wireless, portable computer device."

New claim 32 depends from claim 31, and recites the further steps of "reading a pay-out amount from said voucher record; transmitting, along with said voucher pay-out approval indication, said pay-out amount from the central network computer to said wireless, portable computer device via said remote wireless interface; and displaying said pay-out amount at said wireless, portable computer device."

Claim 33 is a new independent claim related to a system "for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from electronic gaming machines used by players," and includes, among other things, "a central computer; a pay-out voucher database...; and a plurality of wireless computer devices adapted for manual transport and configured for use by gaming establishment personnel, each of said wireless computer devices comprising a data input interface configured to receive manually or semi-manually entered pay-out voucher identification information based upon information existing on the pay-out vouchers dispensed from the electronic gaming machines; a wireless transceiver configured to communicate with said central computer via a remote wireless interface and transmit voucher validation requests thereby, and to receive validation responses from the central computer, and a display configured to display information pertaining to the validation responses received from the central computer."

New claim 34 depends from claim 33, and specifies that the pay-out vouchers "are dispensed from the electronic gaming machines at the termination of gaming sessions in response to player pay-out requests and reflect arbitrary amounts of accumulated gaming machine credit during the gaming sessions."

It is respectfully submitted that each of new claims 24-34 is allowable over Schneier et al '398 and other items of record.

Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

A supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith, citing several additional items.

Availability for Further Discussion

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney should the Examiner have any questions about this paper, or wish to discuss this application further.

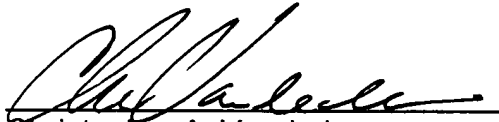
Request for Allowance

It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for final allowance, and issuance of a Notice of Allowance is requested forthwith.

Respectfully submitted,
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**MARKED-UP VERSION OF ABSTRACT SHOWING AMENDMENTS
BY UNDERLINING AND STRIKETHROUGH**

A system and method for wireless validation of gaming vouchers output from electronic gaming machines includes ~~a number of electronic gaming machines physically connected to~~ a centralized computer which receives and stores game transaction information, including records of printed vouchers and pay-out amounts, relating thereto. ~~Voucher records are stored by the centralized computer in a voucher database. When a player desires to~~ To cash-out a voucher, the voucher information is entered ~~by an attendant in~~ into a wireless, portable computer device, and the information is relayed to a remote wireless interface connected to the centralized computer, ~~which invokes a verification application program. The~~ A verification application program verifies that the voucher is valid and not paid out by checking the voucher database. It then updates the voucher record to indicate that the voucher has been paid, ~~reads out the pay out amount for the voucher, and transmits the pay-out amount to the wireless, portable computer device, where it is displayed. If a voucher is not valid or already paid out, a denial message is transmitted to the wireless, portable computer device. The system may include a primary network and a secondary network with redundant, cross-referenced voucher databases, and one of the two networks may be responsible for managing the wireless voucher requests.~~

**MARKED-UP VERSION OF CLAIMS SHOWING AMENDMENTS
BY UNDERLINING AND STRIKETHROUGH**

1. (Amended) A method for validating gaming vouchers ~~printed by~~
dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, comprising the steps of:

receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher ~~printed by~~ dispensed from an electronic gaming machine;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said remote wireless interface connected to a central network computer;

conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer;

retrieving a voucher record in a voucher database based upon said voucher identification information;

confirming, based on payment information in said voucher record, that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been paid;

updating said voucher record to indicate that the pay-out voucher has been paid;

transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from said central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher record was found and not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if either said voucher record was not found or else the pay-out voucher was already paid; and

displaying an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
reading a pay-out amount from said voucher record;
transmitting, along with said voucher pay-out approval indication, said pay-out amount from the central network computer to said wireless, portable computer device via said remote ~~transmitter~~ interface; and
displaying said pay-out amount at said wireless, portable computer device.

3. (Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
automatically transmitting from an electronic gaming machine, when the pay-out voucher is initially ~~printed-out~~ dispensed, said voucher identification information and the pay-out amount to said central network computer through an on-line gaming system connection; and
creating and storing a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the pay-out voucher was initially ~~printed-out~~ dispensed.

6. (Amended) A system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers printed by dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, the system comprising:

a wireless, portable computer device, said wireless, portable computer device comprising a display, a data input interface, and a radio transceiver;

a remote wireless interface capable of communicating with said radio transceiver;

a central computer connected to said remote wireless interface, said central computer programmed with a voucher verification program; and

a voucher database connected to said central computer;

wherein said voucher verification program receives voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless, portable computer device via said remote wireless interface, confirms the existence of a corresponding voucher record in said voucher database, confirms by checking the voucher record that the pay-out

voucher has not yet been paid, updates the voucher record, if unpaid, to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid, and sends, via said wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval indication to said wireless, portable computer device if said the pay-out voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication to said wireless, portable computer device; and

wherein said wireless, portable computer device receives voucher validation request information relating to pay-out vouchers through its data input interface, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications ~~on~~ on its display in response to receiving them from said central computer.

7. (Amended) The system of claim 6, wherein said voucher verification program reads a pay-out amount from said voucher record, if unpaid, and sends, via said wireless interface, said pay-out amount to said portable computer device along with said voucher pay-out approval indication; and

wherein said wireless, portable computer device displays said pay-out amount ~~at said portable computer device~~ on its display.

8. (Amended) The system of claim 6, further comprising a gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines, wherein an electronic gaming machine automatically transmits voucher identification information and pay-out amount to said central computer via said gaming machine interface each time a pay-out voucher is ~~printed out~~ dispensed from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer creates and stores a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

9. (Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the pay-out voucher was initially ~~printed out~~ dispensed.

13. (Amended) A method for on-line or off-line validation of gaming pay-out vouchers ~~printed by~~ dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher ~~printed by~~ dispensed from an electronic gaming machine;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said remote wireless interface connected to a central network computer;

conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer;

attempting to retrieve a voucher record in a voucher database based upon said voucher identification information;

confirming, if said voucher record was retrieved, that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been paid based on payment information in said voucher record, and transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from said central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if said the pay-out voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if said the pay-out voucher record was already paid;

displaying, if said voucher record was retrieved, an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device;

transmitting, if said voucher record could not be retrieved, a voucher record unavailable indication from said central network computer, via said remote wireless interface, to said wireless, portable computer device;

receiving said voucher record unavailable indication at said wireless, portable computer device and, in response thereto, displaying an off-line error message;

receiving a voucher amount at said wireless, remote computer device after displaying said off-line error message;

transmitting said voucher amount and said voucher identification information, via said wireless interface, to said central network computer from said wireless, portable computer device; and

preparing a voucher database reconciliation record at said central network computer for updating said voucher database at a subsequent time to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid.

14. (Amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of, in connection with transmitting said voucher pay-out approval to said wireless, portable computer device, updating said voucher record to indicate that the pay-out voucher has been paid,

16. (Amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
transmitting from an electronic gaming machine, when the pay-out voucher is initially ~~printed-out~~ dispensed, said voucher identification information and the pay-out amount to said central network computer; and
creating and storing a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

17. (Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the pay-out voucher was initially ~~printed-out~~ dispensed.

19. (Amended) A system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers printed by dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, the system comprising:

a plurality of wireless, portable computer devices, each of said wireless, portable computer devices comprising a display, a data input interface, and a radio transceiver;

a remote wireless interface capable of communicating with the radio transceivers of said wireless, portable computer devices and distinguishing transmissions therefrom;

a central computer connected to said remote wireless interface, said central computer programmed with a voucher verification program; and

a voucher database connected to said central computer;

wherein said voucher verification program receives voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless, portable computer devices via said remote wireless interface, confirms the existence of a corresponding voucher record in said voucher database for each received voucher validation request, confirms from the voucher database that the pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, updates the voucher record, if unpaid, to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid, and sends, via said wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval indication to the wireless, portable computer device originally sending the voucher validation request if said the pay-out voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication; and

wherein each wireless, portable computer device ~~originally~~ transmitting a voucher validation request receives the voucher validation request information relating to pay-out vouchers through its data input interface, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications ~~on-screen~~ on its display in response to receiving them from said central computer.

21. (Amended) The system of claim 19, further comprising a gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines, wherein an electronic gaming machine automatically transmits voucher identification information and pay-out amount to said central computer via said gaming machine interface each time a pay-out voucher is ~~printed out~~ dispensed from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer creates and stores a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

22. (Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the pay-out voucher was initially ~~printed-out~~ dispensed.